

IOWA ARTIST **Nadine Big Bear**

TITLE **Shields from Nature**

GRADE LEVEL **Elementary**

These lesson plans are designed for art educators to adapt to the needs of their individual classes.

INFLUENCE

Native American Culture
and Traditions

MATERIALS

Pencils with erasers
2 paper circles per student
Compass
Rulers
Colored pencils or markers
Cardboard circle patterns
Yarn
Colored beads
Hole puncher
Glue gun
Colored Feathers
Cardstock



Iowa Artist Nadine Big Bear
Native American beadwork

LESSON PLAN: ELEMENTARY

Nadine Big Bear

OVERVIEW

Influenced by the purpose for her art and a tradition passed on by her grandmother, Nadine Big Bear designs traditional Native American jewelry at her Meskwaki Settlement home. This Iowa folk artist finds inspiration from within and states that her creations are built from the heart and soul. When commissioned for a piece, Nadine Big Bear produces jewelry using symbolism and the client's personality to create the designs. These commissioned pieces are often used in costumes. In this lesson students will create patterns for beaded shields and connect traditional Native American jewelry art found on the Meskwaki Settlement with their own inspirations from nature.

Preview the Nadine Big Bear **Biography**, **Video Synopsis**, **Video** and **Images** of her work on the Iowa Arts Council web site www.iowaartscouncil.org/ and select resources appropriate for your adaptation of this lesson. Have students locate the artist's place of residence on an Iowa map.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What inspires and influences Iowa artist Nadine Big Bear?
- How does Iowa artist Nadine Big Bear inspire you?
- What else inspires and influences you and your artwork?

INTRODUCTION

Brainstorm a list of where students find patterns and symmetrical designs in nature and what inspires them about these designs. Invite the students to keep these images in mind as they learn about Iowa folk artist Nadine Big Bear.

In the Native American culture symmetrical designs are used in jewelry, weavings and pottery. Nadine Big Bear chooses designs that are nature based, symmetrical and principled. In this lesson students will create a pattern for a Native American "shield," similar to the bead artwork made by Nadine Big Bear.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- identify patterns and symmetrical designs in nature and in art
- plan, create and evaluate the creation of a symmetrical design using Native American symbolism
- identify symmetry and purpose in Native American artwork
- use a compass to create a circle
- define and differentiate between complementary and analogous colors
- connect the artist within to folk artist Nadine Big Bear and her technique of using symmetry in design

PROCEDURES

1. Show students the video of Nadine Big Bear. Ask students to watch for the artist's techniques, what inspires and influences the artist and what inspires them about the artist's work. Discuss the students' reflections and connections to Nadine Big Bear's art, her techniques and the symbolism of her work.
2. Gather a variety of Native American symbols for students to view. Identify the meanings of the symbols. Share with students that many Native American symbols are symmetrical and highlight the symmetrical designs.

more >

IOWA'S
CULTURAL
+
ARTISTIC
LEGACY
EVOLVES

Influence + Inspiration

LESSON PLAN: ELEMENTARY
Nadine Big Bear



A variety of symbols and their meanings can be found at
www.whats-your-sign.com/native-american-symbols.html

3. Using the symbols provided, instruct students to choose one or two that they are interested in using for their artwork. In this lesson students will design a shield, first in pencil and then using markers or colored pencils. Beads will enhance the finished shield. Students will use three lengths of yarn with a few beads on each one to hang from their shield.
4. Demonstrate the technique of beginning with a central design then adding to the top, side and bottom with final work on the border. Provide students with a small paper circle for experimenting with when creating a design. Do these first drafts in pencil to allow for corrections.
5. Demonstrate the use of a compass and ruler to transfer the draft design to cardstock. Discuss color choice by sharing a color wheel and showing complementary and analogous colors. Demonstrate the addition of beads and feathers to finish off the shield. Punch two or three holes near the bottom of the circle. Use yarn or colored string to hang from the punched holes. Finish each string with two or three beads hanging from each to complete the design. Demonstrate to students how to make knots to hold the beads.
6. Provide an opportunity for students to share their final product, discussing the meaning they were hoping to convey, choice of color and experience in creating a symmetrical design. Expect students to communicate how this would compare with the work Nadine Big Bear does with beads.

RESOURCES

Internet

www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/m_r/momaday/shields2.htm
 Showcase of Native American shields

www.prairieedge.com/
 Examples of Native American beadwork, pottery, etc.

www.beadinpath.com
 Illustrations of Czechoslovakian beads

www.native-languages.org/beadwork.htm
 Examples of Native American beadwork

www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife/1/2/index.htm
 information on Meskwaki traditions

Children's Literature

Traditional Native American Arts and Activities (Celebrating our Heritage)
 by Arlette N. Braman

Come Look With Me: Exploring Native American Art With Children
(Come Look With Me Series) by Stephanie Salomon

Native American Stories (Myths and Legends) by Joseph Bruchac

Literature

New Metal Foil Crafts: Simple and Inspiring Crafts to Make at Home
 by Barbara Matthiessen

National Standards | Iowa Standards

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

IOWA ARTIST **Nadine Big Bear**

TITLE **Shields of Nature**

GRADE LEVEL

Middle | High School

These lesson plans are designed for art educators to adapt to the needs of their individual classes.

INFLUENCE

Native American Culture and Traditions

MATERIALS

A variety of sizes and colors of beads
String for beading
Needles



Iowa Artist Nadine Big Bear
Native American beadwork

LESSON PLAN: MIDDLE | HIGH SCHOOL

Nadine Big Bear

OVERVIEW

Influenced by the purpose for her art and a tradition passed on by her grandmother, Nadine Big Bear designs traditional Native American jewelry at her Meskwaki Settlement home. This Iowa folk artist finds inspiration from within and states that her creations are built from the heart and soul. When commissioned for a piece, Nadine Big Bear produces jewelry using symbolism and the client's personality to create the designs. These commissioned pieces are often used in costumes. In this lesson students will create beaded shields and connect traditional Native American jewelry art found on the Meskwaki Settlement with their own inspirations from nature.

Preview the Nadine Big Bear **Biography**, **Video Synopsis**, **Video** and **Images** of her work on the Iowa Arts Council web site www.iowaartscouncil.org/ and select resources appropriate for your adaptation of this lesson. Have students locate the artist's place of residence on an Iowa map.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What inspires and influences Iowa artist Nadine Big Bear?
- How does Iowa artist Nadine Big Bear inspire you?
- What else inspires and influences you and your artwork?

INTRODUCTION

Brainstorm a list of where students find patterns and symmetrical designs in nature and what inspires them about these designs. Invite the students to keep these images in mind as they learn about Iowa folk artist, Nadine Big Bear. In the Native American culture symmetrical designs are used in jewelry, weavings, and pottery. Nadine Big Bear chooses designs that are nature based, symmetrical and principled. In this lesson students will use beads to create a piece of art.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- research Native American symbols and their meanings
- plan, create and evaluate the creation of a design using Native American symbolism
- define and differentiate between complementary and analogous colors
- experiment with a variety of beading techniques used in jewelry making
- connect the artist within to folk artist Nadine Big Bear's techniques and artistic creations

PROCEDURES

1. Show students the video of Nadine Big Bear. Ask students to watch for the artist's techniques, what inspires and influences the artist and what inspires them about the artist's work. Discuss the students' reflections and connections to Nadine Big Bear's art, her techniques and the symbolism of her work.
2. Share resources and provide internet access for students to research Native American symbols and their meanings. A variety of symbols can be found at: www.whats-your-sign.com/native-american-symbols.html.
3. Instruct students to identify one or two symbols in their research that have personal meaning, inspiration or are artistically interesting to the students
more ›

IOWA'S
CULTURAL
+
ARTISTIC
LEGACY
EVOLVES

Influence + Inspiration

LESSON PLAN: MIDDLE | HIGH SCHOOL
Nadine Big Bear



for the creation of their own piece of jewelry. Using these symbols, students will design their piece of jewelry and select beads for the creation of their piece.

4. Prior to students beginning to create their jewelry, the teacher may choose to provide explicit instruction on some or all of the following concepts:
 - the use of color in jewelry (complementary and analogous colors)
 - beading techniques (description and definition found at www.kstrom.net/isk/art/art_bea2.html)
 - Double-needled appliqué, peyote beading, etc.
 - symmetrical design
5. The lesson may culminate with students' discussion and sharing of their artwork including the work's meaning, their choice of color and experience in creating a symmetrical design.

RESOURCES

Internet

www.kstrom.net/isk/art/art_bead.html

Native American beading information, techniques and federal legislation protecting this art form

www.nmai.si.edu/

National Museum of the American Indian

www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/m_r/momaday/shields2.htm

Showcase of Native American shields

www.prairieedge.com/

Examples of Native American beadwork, pottery, etc

www.beadinpath.com

Illustrations of Czechoslovakian beads

www.native-languages.org/beadwork.htm

Examples of Native American beadwork

www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife/1/2/index.htm

information on Meskwaki traditions

Literature

Traditional Native American Arts and Activities (Celebrating our Heritage)
by Arlette N. Braman

Come Look With Me: Exploring Native American Art With Children (Come Look With Me Series) by Stephanie Salomon

Native American Stories (Myths and Legends) by Joseph Bruchac

National Standards | Iowa Standards

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines